

City of Kalamazoo
PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2025
FINAL

Members Present: Michelle Audette-Bauman; Mitchell Curtiss; Thomas Kostrzewa; Wendell Tolber; Zack Wilson; Brian Pittelko; Roland Bissonnette

Members Excused: Jennifer Swan; Christine Dascenzo

City Staff: Bobby Durkee, Assistant City Planner; Beth Cheeseman, Executive Administrative Assistant; Charlie Bear, Assistant City Attorney; Christina Anderson, City Planner

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commissioner Pittelko called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Planner Durkee proceeded with roll call and determined there was a quorum.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

Planner Durkee requested to hear item F.1. The Capital Improvement Plan presentation before item E.1. the request to rezone 4301 Stadium Drive.

Commissioner Kostrzewa, seconded by Commissioner Bissonnette, moved approval of the November 6, 2025 Planning Commission agenda as amended. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Tolber, seconded by Commissioner Curtiss, moved approval of the September 4, 2025 minutes as presented. With a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

D. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planner Durkee announced a special joint training meeting of the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Natural Features Protection Review Committee to go over the roles and responsibilities of each board and how they overlap. The meeting will be held on November 12, 2025 at 245 N. Rose Street.

Planner Durkee announced that emailed communication received regarding the rezoning request of 4301 Stadium Drive were in a binder on the dais. Commissioner Pittelko reassured residents that their emails were received.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. P.C. #2025.05 a request from Stadium Drive #1, LLC to rezone 4301 Stadium Drive from RM-15 (Residential, Multi-Dwelling) & RS-5 (Residential, Single-Dwelling) to CC (Community Commercial)

Commissioner Pittelko shared some procedures for public comments to help the meeting go smoothly.

Attorney Bear shared that the Commission would be acting as a quasi-judicial body. Judicial in that they consider facts presented through testimony and documents and make their decision based on those facts. Quasi-judicial in that they don't have all the powers of a regular judge. He reminded them that the Planning Commission decision would be a recommendation to the City Commission.

Attorney Bear asked them to set aside any bias or personal opinion they have in order to make an impartial decision. The ordinance lists the factors to be considered in making this determination. He encouraged them to take the facts, apply them to the factors, and determine what weight to give them. Attorney Bear said that zoning classifications have to be consistent with the Master Plan. He stated that they would be considering all the uses in the CC district and how that fits into the picture of granting or not granting the zoning change. This particular property is under the Natural Features Protection Overlay (NFP-O) district. Attorney Bear said they would consider the impact that has on surrounding uses.

Planner Durkee stated there was no proposed removal of the NFP-O. He provided a brief history of the rezoning requests for this property. This request is from the property owner. However, at the applicant hosted Public Participation meeting, Mr. David Rapp introduced himself as an interested buyer in the property who was in the due diligence phase of a purchase. Planner Durkee explained that one item in the due diligence phase was to get the property rezoned to the Community Commercial (CC) zone district.

Planner Durkee showed photos and maps of the property. He shared that the natural features on the property were slopes, woodlands, and possibly wetlands. Planner Durkee explained that the property is unique because it sits in a transition zone. This is a transition between municipalities, between land uses, and between zoning.

Commissioner Tolber asked if the new applicant had anything in mind to build or if that was not yet established. Planner Durkee stated that was not established.

Commissioner Kostrzewa asked why the property was marketed as commercial when it is currently zoned residential. Planner Durkee deferred that question until later in his presentation.

Planner Durkee showed a map for NFP-O. He explained that the apartment complex is listed as commercial – a classification given by Assessing. The Future Land Use (FLU) map shows 4301 Stadium Drive as commercial zoning. Planner Durkee shared that the applicant had a public meeting a week ago per the Public Participation Plan (PPP) requirements. He said that he looked into the plans of agencies and groups around this property. Winchell has a neighborhood plan that speaks to this property; some of the property around it is owned by WMU; and he checked MDOT.

Planner Durkee read the decision criteria in full stating they are a mirror of the ones in the staff report.

1. The extent to which the amendment is consistent with the 2025 Master Plan and Strategic Vision.
 - The FLU plan and the 2025 Master Plan describe the property as commercial with the NFP-O.
 - The proposed zone offers a much broader range of uses than the residential zone offers - including low-impact and high-intensity commercial uses.
 - The Winchell Neighborhood Plan emphasizes low-impact design with respect to the existing natural features.
 - CC zoning dimensional standards are very flexible, which could make alignment with the NFP-O standards easier.

2. The extent to which there are changed conditions that require an amendment.
 - The Master Plan prioritizes alignment between streets and adjacent uses.
 - Stadium Drive is an auto-oriented, high speed, high volume suburban corridor. The property sits along two bus routes with steady ridership numbers. The automobile and transit volumes provide an ability to service higher capacity uses than the existing residential zoning.
 - There has been growth and changing land use pressures on the west side of the City and impact on land uses. The BTR park has expanded, the new development has steadily increased along the Drake Road corridor both in City of Kalamazoo and township of Oshtemo.
 - The current zoning of residential would permit by right only low-impact or single residential family uses which do not align with the context of the corridor and surrounding streets of Stadium Drive and Drake Road.
 - The intersection of Stadium Drive and Drake Road is a regional crossing served by high speed traffic, multiple transit lines, and limited and dense adjacent residential areas, highlighting the alignment of CC as the most appropriate zone.

3. There is a demonstrated community need.
 - The CC district allows a wide range of commercial uses and mixed uses which are appropriate for the Stadium Drive corridor.
 - The NFP-O serves to support development (of any type) while supporting the preservation and enhancement of a site's natural features. Protecting features with sustainable and equitable development are community needs outlined in the Strategic Vision.
 - The proposed zone district permits higher density, which is supported by available road capacity and transit in areas where the infrastructure exists. The ability to permit the uses and density along this frontage supports the long-term needs of the community as outlined in the Strategic Vision.

4. Compatibility with surrounding uses.
 - The land use is not compatible with surrounding land uses which include multi-family housing and large-scale retail and restaurant uses.

- The existing zone designation of NFP-O is intended to guide site development balancing growth and redevelopment with the protection of our existing natural features.
5. Would result in a logical and orderly development pattern.
- The development pattern of Stadium Drive is auto-oriented, commercial, on a fast, highly traveled street. The CC zone district supports the continuation of this pattern.
 - CC and the NFP-O zone districts would strike a balance to create a flexible, market-driven approach to the property while keeping the existing natural features and adjacent preserve in mind.

Commissioner Curtiss asked for the how, when, and why this property was slated for commercial use. Planner Durkee stated that it was determined through the 2025 Master Plan process.

Commissioner Tolber read some excerpts from the Winchell Neighborhood Plan about their desires for this property. He asked if those items in the plan would be a suggestion, expectation, or rule for when the developer was ready to build. Planner Durkee stated that the zoning ordinance is the decision on the land. A Master Plan and a Neighborhood Plan are aspirational plans to work toward. A CC zone district would support the development of the scale detailed in the Neighborhood Plan; however, a CC district could support other uses too. Commissioner Tolber asked if the rezoning was approved, would the developer have to get permission to build, or could he build whatever he wants. Planner Durkee said that all uses permitted in the use table of the CC zone would be permitted. At minimum, it would require site plan review and go before the NFP Review Committee.

Commissioner Wilson asked for more information about how things are built differently as a result of the NFP Overlay. Planner Durkee said NFP-O promotes a thoughtful development. NFP-O has development standards that protect trees, woodlands, wetlands, swamps, slopes, and water bodies. He stated that this site has woodlands, and slopes. With woodland, a developer can remove a percentage of the wood based off the acreage of the property. With slopes, there is a set back the equal distance of the height of the slope for slopes that have 20% or greater slope. Commissioner Wilson asked how the NFP-O was enforced. Planner Durkee said it was enforced through the Site Plan Review Committee and City staff.

Commissioner Kostrzewa commented that they wanted to serve the Master Plan, but the Master Plan is not a legally binding obligation. He asked how much of Kalamazoo right now is spot zoned and is in violation of the Master Plan. Planner Anderson stepped forward to answer. She said that since the approval of the 2025 Master Plan, staff have worked in small pieces to update the zoning standards and the map following the FLU plan. The downtown, commercial districts, and corridors in town have all been updated. They still need to update residential districts and manufacturing. Planner Anderson shared that, through that work, they aligned the zoning code with the FLU plan. She couldn't give an exact number of parcels but confirmed that they had used the FLU plan as a guide for that work. Commissioner Kostrzewa wondered to what extent they wanted to bring every property in the City into compliance with the Master Plan. Planner Anderson stated that the Master Plan is their guiding document. The state tells them that the zoning code should align with the Master Plan, so that is how they've been moving forward. Planner Anderson said that all of their zoning work is done through a public process – including the Master Plan. Staff worked

up the FLU plan after community engagement. It was reviewed by the community and ultimately approved of by this body and the City Commission.

Commissioner Kostrzewa asked if there was a database showing spot zoning in violation of the Master Plan. Planner Anderson clarified that spot zoning is when a parcel is zoned with something incongruent with everything around it. That is different from FLU designation. There is no list, they've been working to align the zoning map with FLU plan.

Commissioner Wilson asked for examples of other areas that are zoned CC and have the NFP-O. Planner Durkee cited Gage Cannabis on Stadium Drive. The rear of the property is woodland, and it has a tall retaining wall. They were required to have a bigger stormwater pond because of NFP-O standards.

Planner Durkee clarified for Commissioner Bissonnette that this property's FLU is marked for heavy commercial and also included in the NFP-O. Commissioner Bissonnette wondered what the mode of redress would be if the NFP-O was violated or ignored. Planner Durkee explained that it would be a zoning ordinance violation handled by the City's Zoning Administrator and code enforcement staff. Something like that would probably result in a Stop Work order followed by enforcement notices which could lead to civil infractions.

Commissioner Pittelko asked how much of the parcel is developable vs. how much is out of bounds. The slopes would be his primary concern. Planner Durkee didn't have that information.

Commissioner Curtiss asked if any development would be able to have an entrance off Stadium Drive if that slope would have to be maintained. Planner Anderson stated that the Commissioners were asking detailed design questions that were site plan related. The Planning Commissioners were being asked to determine if the district was appropriate. She said they wouldn't necessarily know at this time the details about the extent of the natural features. That level of diligence is done with site development. They know there are woodlands and some protected slopes on the property. When someone develops a property with NFP-O, they need to go through and do a much more detailed analysis to understand the boundary of the woodland, and the slopes. If CC is determined to be the appropriate zone district, the natural features would be investigated prior to site design and prior to coming forward for the next steps. Commissioner Curtiss said that made sense. He was trying to establish influence on traffic patterns, relationships to neighboring uses and zonings. He was trying to determine if this parcel would behave like the one across the street or behave like it is off Drake Road. Planner Anderson said the zoning code always has relief valves associated with it through the NFP Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Commissioner Audette-Bauman asked if that meant there would potentially be a waiver to access the property that would override the NFP limitations. Planner Anderson explained that a variance for property in the NFP-O is reviewed by the NFP Board and also the ZBA.

Ms. Emily Palacios, landowner representative, and contract purchaser, David Rapp, stepped forward to speak to their application. Ms. Palacios stated that while the property is challenging with its Natural Features, it is 18.8 acres. That is a considerable amount of land. She said the existing zoning pattern is

unworkable. The multi-family residential zone is a small strip across the Stadium frontage, and the balance is single-family residential. She said there is no market demand for that type of use at this location. Ms. Palacios suggested that residential use of the land could have greater potential to harm the preserve than well-managed, well-engineered, modern commercial development. She said that commercial uses are more highly regulated, and the City has a better opportunity of working toward reaching the goals of preserving Asylum Lake and the preserve. Ms. Palacios said the property was being marketed by Callendar Commercial. They have received consistent interest in commercial opportunities at this site, but interested parties lose interest each time they hear the zoning. People don't want to put a tremendous amount of time and money into developing detailed plans that will be shot down at the zoning phase. Residential development would be difficult given the heavy traffic. A broker indicated that there is room for the market to expand and that this is the most desirable retail sales area in the county. She said they would like to work with the NFP-O district and figure out what can be done on the site respecting those rules. Ms. Palacios showed pictures of trash, and debris left on the site after a homeless encampment was moved out. She said it took five people a month to remove the environmental waste from the property. They want to see this property rezoned so it can be developed and managed in a way, so these things are not happening on this property.

Mr. Rapp said he is based in Grand Rapids. He has been involved in developing properties throughout West Michigan for 25+ years. These projects have ranged from residential to industrial. Mr. Rapp said he has been involved in projects that are complicated. He doesn't feel they can address the site issues (topography, overlay, traffic, curb cuts, tenants) until they determine if the property will be rezoned to commercial.

Commissioner Tolber asked if he could tell them the types of projects he'd done by percentage. Mr. Rapp answered that he had done a wide range of projects, but more were industrial and land related and less were retail. More were user driven developments. Commissioner Tolber asked for confirmation that he had built in sensitive areas before. Mr. Rapp thought that every project you get involved with has a sensitive area that needs to be addressed.

Commissioner Audette-Bauman asked why they chose CC zoning vs. other commercial districts available. She wondered if this was dictated by the FLU map or if there was something specific that requires it. Ms. Palacios stated that the property owner requested CC because it fits best with the Master Plan recommendation.

Commissioner Tolber asked how the property owner would be involved once the sale was complete to Mr. Rapp. Ms. Palacios stated that the owner had to sign the rezoning application. If for some reason, Mr. Rapp's due diligence is not favorable, Mr. Tehrani will still own the property. Mr. Tehrani is interested in the property being zoned CC. Commissioner Tolber asked what could go wrong if the property was zoned CC. Ms. Palacios said there could be large expenses for site remediation.

Commissioner Wilson asked the applicant if he had an estimate of how much of this land was developable. Mr. Rapp guessed that about half of the property could be developed (9ish acres). He said that from a

commercial development perspective, most uses would be up along Stadium Drive. The depth of the property is not as important as road frontage.

Commissioner Kostrzewa asked Mr. Rapp if he had any intention of turning property over – selling it. Mr. Rapp thought there would be people who may want to own rather than lease the property.

Commissioner Pittelko opened the public hearing.

Commissioner Pittelko made some suggestions to make the public comment period go smoothly. He reminded those speaking to sign-in and that Planning Commissioners would not answer any questions. Commissioner Pittelko confirmed they would have breaks, but that every person who wished to do so would have a chance to speak.

Commissioner Pittelko stated that the request before them was for a general rezoning from single family residential and multi-family residential to community commercial and all potential uses that go along with that. He said there was a lot of discussion about a car wash, but that is not the current issue tonight. Vehicle services are one of the permitted uses in CC, but that does require a special use permit.

The following residents spoke in opposition to the rezoning of 4301 Stadium Drive.

Dok Stevens, Stephanie Watkins, Christopher Bovid, Michael Fountain, Tiffany Schriever, Katie Bloom, Maggie Howard, Iris Potter, John Kreuzer, Sherry Sims, Ian Middleton, Ron Zellers, Tom Howes, Wendy Denning, Judy Huxmann, Ian Magnuson, Dan Foley, Robert Piellusch, Tammy Hibner, Nancy Arcadipone, Sharon Ferraro, Cathy Miller, Sean Duross, Eve Hibbard, Aaron Maust, Nick Richardson, Roger Wylan, Joshua Kieser, Steve VandenBussche, Carol Anderson, Jordan Vanas-Peterson, Vicki Vanas, Rosemary Knapp, Sophia Schmidt, Patricia Haas, Mary Spradling, Ruth Prins Bolst, Katie Justa, David Birkam, Samantha Vimes, Aaron Wright, Jeff Mitchell, Jennifer Thomas, Laurie Laing, Bec Tellis, Laura Moss, Jimmy Lane, Barbara Welborn, Lilly Suarez, Dick Wheeler, Aaron Thiel, Elissa Cahn, Caroline Enriquez, Mark Hoffman, Nic Hampton, Andrew Argo, Emily Connor, Matt Sovers, Sean Kermath, Chandra Kinney, Rex Brueggemann, Taylar Donley, Michael Zwick, Zach Lassiter, Paul Boldt, Justin Suarez, Ellen Vandermyde, Jensen Sprowl, Sharon Dever, Buddy Sasquach, Gabrel Giron, Bea, Ash, Alyssa Collin, John Kermath, Thomas Standal, Chris Wills, Brandon Carlson, Luke Zimmer, Rachel Mandrick, Mara, Alessandra, Alex Baker.

The residents cited the following reasons.

- Wants the zoning changed permanently to a national area; green space area; PUD.
- Wants the Master Plan changed so this property is a green buffer zone between Stadium and Asylum Lake. Think about changing this in the IK 2035 process.
- Rezoning doesn't meet community needs, and no specific community need was specified. Residents spoke about their need for green space, affordable housing, good jobs that allow people to afford homes, groceries, and healthcare.

- Intersection has been ranked annually as one of the most busy and dangerous intersections in the City. Adding Commercial zoning to this area will increase traffic volume, congestion, and accidents involving injuries and fatalities. Will place additional strain on emergency responders.
- The Community has rushed to protect Asylum Lake year after year. Residents cited historical examples of people saving the preserve from various developments.
- Large industrial and business facilities can produce air quality issues, light pollution, noise pollution, chemical runoff, water contamination, and impervious surfaces which can have a harmful effect on neighboring ecosystems.
- Lack of trust in potential developers.
- Applicant didn't give answers about what could be built on the site or how they would mitigate potential harm to the Asylum Lake preserve.
- Hazardous waste left behind by homeless people is not the fault of the open space, it is the fault of absentee, negligent commercial landlords.
- Future Land Use map doesn't select appropriate district or intensity.
- Conditions have not materially changed since this request was previously denied.
- Zoning request for a high-intensity commercial development is not compatibility with the adjacent parcels (a residential complex and a nature preserve).
- CC uses would fragment the corridors transition pattern.
- Asylum Lake Preserve is protected by a declaration of conservation restrictions whose first purpose is to promote ecosystem integrity and natural aesthetics. The proposed rezoning conflicts with that purpose.
- The request conflicts with the management framework which directs that special attention be given to water quality in Asylum Lake and the protection of the Asylum Lake water shed. The water shed that also supports several other lakes.
- Asylum Lake was spoken of as a respite/healing place. A place where everyone can enjoy nature. A commercial development has potential to diminish the experience of those who would visit the preserve. Many people stated they moved to the area because of Asylum Lake.
- Gave the example of the CC zoning impact on Woods Lake. Spoke about the remediation of decades of contamination and environmental damage.
- Gave the example of development taking away from the beauty of the Lilian Anderson Arboretum.
- Restoring/remediating is more costly than maintaining and protecting.
- The owner/applicant are not a part of the community in Kalamazoo. It will fall to the community to manage destructive aftereffects.
- 14,000+ people signed a petition against rezoning this property.
- Master Plan calls us to protect and be good stewards of the environment. Master Plan allows the property to be commercial but doesn't require it. Proposed change does not align with 2025 Master Plan prioritizing environmental responsibility, climate resilience, complete neighborhoods, neighborhood compatibility, shared prosperity, and inviting public places.
- The City Commission passed the Climate Emergency Resolution and with it made a commitment to us, our children, and generations that will inherit the decisions made in this room.

- The property is intrinsically linked to Asylum Lake and to the preserve – environmentally, topographically, hydrologically and culturally. What happens on this property happens to Asylum Lake.
- Asylum Lake is a freshwater spring fed lake. It's waters are linked to groundwater aquifers which are the drinking waters of our City.
- Understand and remember we are on Potawatomi land. They had a village at the head of the Kalamazoo River. It is likely they occupied Asylum Lake. Mentioned programs established at Kalamazoo College and WMU related to cultural history and cultural landscapes. This is an opportunity for this community to create a cultural landscape and make this a win for the entire City.
- This would violate the Community Sustainability Plan for protecting the long-term health of the environment and working towards nature based solutions which benefit the community.
- Changing of the zoning would have a permanent impact on the habitat, wildlife, and Asylum Lake Preserve's ecosystem.
- City continues to publicly express the fear of taking. Talked about a U.S. Supreme Court case where the judgement showed that it was not a taking.
- The nature preserve attracts just as many visitors as commercial business.
- The owner bought property at inflated price and is now asking the people of Kalamazoo to repair his gamble. It is not our responsibility.
- Legacy Project - proposes to form an entity to purchase the property to make Mr. Tehrani whole. They respectfully request Mr. Tehrani to give the Legacy Project a reasonable amount of time to raise the money.
- Fears NFP-O would not protect the land.
- Put a pause to catering to the wealthy at the expense of the environment (gave example of the Country Club).
- The Neighborhood Plan and years of community input have been clear that the development of this property should require a low-impact environmentally responsible design.
- A rare species of bee, Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, was found at Asylum Lake. It was thought to be extinct. Repopulation of that species could be interrupted with development.
- There is a fragile balance at Asylum Preserve with so many threats from commercial buildings to invasive plants, and vandalism. No one plans for things to happen, but they happen.
- Believes that companies coming in can afford to break laws and pay fines.
- Stated there have been persistent complaints and conflicts with other commercial buildings along Stadium Drive. These have included late night noises and lighting, fast food smoke, nighttime music, significant dumping of concrete on top of a sanitary sewer easement. Incompatible zoning would introduce a commercial creep without a substantial buffer.
- This property would be prohibitively expensive to build on. The economics of that area are terrible. It would be smart to expand residential areas.

Commissioner Pittelko called for a break.

- The Winchell Neighborhood plan is in conflict with this request.

- Property owner and legal team are weaponizing the Master Plan against the people of the City.
- Caller spoke about common law being based on precedence. This rezoning request was rejected twice establishing precedent.
- Provide the City with Good Governance which means making and implementing public decisions that are collaborative, inclusive, and data driven.

Commissioner Pittelko closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Pittelko thanked all of the residents for their input. He stated he was looking for a motion to rezone to start discussion. Commissioner Pittelko reiterated that they should focus on the criteria. The design, NFP, and site plan questions cannot be answered tonight. If any use requires a Special Use Permit (SUP), it will come back to this body.

Commissioner Tolber, supported by Commissioner Audette Bauman, moved to rezone 4301 Stadium Drive from RM-15 and RS-5 to CC, Community Commercial.

Commissioner Tolber said he feels like the Master Plan contradicts itself. He mentioned that the rezoning would allow all uses permitted in the proposed zone and that stays with the land regardless of owner. Commissioner Tolber said they must consider the impact and compatibility of the proposed zone with the proposed use. He read a part of the Winchel Neighborhood Plan and believed that the high-intensity commercial zoning contradicts the plan. Commissioner Tolber said he did not believe the request was consistent with the Master Plan; there were no changing conditions; and the request goes against community needs. Commissioner Tolber stated that Kalamazoo is trying to remediate storm runoff from Stadium Drive. He felt a yes vote could bring more of those issues in 10-20 years. The quality of the application was disappointing – like there was not a lot of due diligence performed. Commissioner Tolber mentioned that the relationship between the applicant and Mr. Tehrani was a bit of a red flag. He felt that NFP Overlay rezoning requests or building should have a higher standard of preliminary planning so they have more insight as to what can or should be done. There were a lot of questions to which they didn't have answers. Commissioner Tolber stated that he was voting no.

Commissioners Kostrzewa and Pittelko clarified that the motion on table was to approve the rezoning request.

Commissioner Audette–Bauman thought the alignment with the Master Plan was narrow. It seemed focused on FLU map at the expense of the rest of the Master Plan. For her that was a critical decision point.

Commissioner Wilson said they heard again and again that there wasn't a demonstration of community need. No statistics were cited outlining types of commercial uses needed in the community. He also heard that development has the potential to cause detriment to the long-term vision of the community. Commissioner Wilson stated that the Master Plan mentions Smart Growth principles: to preserve open space, farmland, and natural beauty in critical environmental areas; to strengthen and direct development towards existing areas. He felt there were places where they see the Master Plan in conflict with other things.

Commissioner Curtiss stated that one good point was that this location is not specifically the CC zoning node. It could be one of three or four commercial aspects of the zoning map - which brings up a question of intensity. Another thing brought up is the nature of transitional space. Bringing CC across the street is fostering a pretty harsh transition – abutting CC to RS-5 which is Asylum Lake itself. He would be more inclined to look at less intensive uses which would speak to the transitional nature of the site. Commissioner Curtiss didn't think it met the criteria for changed conditions. Community needs are where the application struggled the most. It was clear to see how the community views this. Commissioner Curtiss stated that the 2023 Needs Survey went out and preserving natural beauty ranked ahead of commercial development. He was concerned that the staff report didn't mention the property to the south – which happens to be the natural wetlands and RS-5 zoning. The request is compatible with the north, but not the south. Commissioner Curtiss thought the CC zoning could exacerbate traffic issues.

Commissioner Kostrzewa agreed with Commissioner Curtiss.

Commissioner Tolber followed up on the intensity of development. He stated that the Winchell Neighborhood Plan states the intensity of development at this site should be more neighborhood oriented in scale supporting transition from commercial to residential. This directly contradicts what we see is permitted in the proposed zone.

Commissioner Bissonnette thanked everyone for coming out. He agreed with all the other commissioners. There is a profound lack of a community need for this rezoning. It was vague what the land would be used for, and you can't articulate a need based off vagaries. Commissioner Bissonnette failed to see and was not convinced about how the NFP-O could be compatible with highest intensity commercial use development. He thought they were diametrically opposed, and he would vote no.

Commissioner Pittelko thanked everyone for being there and listening to everyone. The one speaker he felt was most compelling when they talked about the broader principles of environmental protection, talked about what they've had to do to clean up Woods Lake. He was aware of their efforts. That was a solid point. This is Stadium Drive, it is a very high traffic, high volume commercial area. But the adjoining parcels are medium and higher-density residential, and the southern parcel is a preserve and lake. Consideration of the area as a buffer or as an increasing usage rather than an outpost of highest commercial followed by residential and then commercial again was compelling to him. Commissioner Pittelko didn't hear a reason to go against that. There are some points toward a level of commercial development in that area. He understands that folks desire to have designated as a green space forever, but there is also some interest in having a neighborhood or some level of commercial activity there. Something that respects the potential environmental concerns of that area.

Commissioner Pittelko asked for a roll call vote – explaining again that a yes is a vote for rezoning and no is a vote to maintain the property under its current zoning.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was denied unanimously.

F. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. P.C. #2025.06 Capital Improvement Plan - A request by the Community Planning and Economic Development Department to review the 2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Planner Durkee announced that Director James Baker was there to give a presentation on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and there would not be any action necessary from the Planning Commissioners.

Director Baker shared that the CIP provides project funding and capital project deliverables by funding department: General fund, Parking, Major Streets, Local Streets, Water, and Wastewater. Water and Wastewater are focused on regulatory compliance, infrastructure, improving water quality, and other initiatives. The General fund supports the facilities at City Hall and heavy equipment purchases. Director Baker said that Parking is a new program that was broken out separately. He spoke about funding for Major and Local Streets, and mentioned programs for stormwater, street lighting, and the Streets For All Plan. Director Baker shared a bar chart showing the breakdown for each area of investment. He went through and highlighted projects from each category. Director Baker noted their application for funding from the State of Michigan for Kalamazoo Sustainable Biosolids Alternatives. He also stated they are making good progress in replacing lead services line in the City of Kalamazoo. At the end of October, they had replaced 6,112 lead service lines. He said they will be in Edison all of next year. They have already completed all of Eastside, Eastwood, Parchment, Northside, West Douglas, Westwood, Stuart, and they are half-way through Edison. They will then shift their focus to Vine, then go south from there. Director Baker said they are also working to consolidate the number of water treatment plants - creating bigger footprints and more treatment at certain locations.

Commissioner Pittelko asked if there was a general era in which a house was built that they would or would not have lead service pipe. Director Baker referred to a City of Kalamazoo webpage as a resource for that information. On that page you can look up any City address under Water Service Material Lookup. He did caution that some records might not be totally accurate. If it says “likely,” then they believe it based on age of construction and when water main was installed. Director Baker said that, broadly speaking, lead services were found in houses built from 1869–1949. He explained that service lines could have gone in before a house was built.

Dr Kostrzewa congratulated Director Baker on the impressive work on infrastructure. He wondered how confident he was in federal funds. Director Baker said that he was confident that the work they’ve done to obtain these awards continues to stand today. He said they have maintained good relationships with MDOT.

Commissioner Tolber asked about tree trimming projects. Director Baker said those projects are considered operational – not capital. They are funded through the solid waste fund. He mentioned a new program that identifies Silver Maple trees as being more problematic during storm events. They will have a trimming and removal strategy for those trees – with plans to replant. Commissioner Tolber asked if that documentation was public. Director Baker said the policy was brought before the Tree Committee and they would be able to provide those documents.

Commissioner Pittelko thanked Director Baker for all the work and updates.

G. REPORTS:

1. City Planner's Report

Planner Anderson encouraged Planning Commissioners to attend the joint board training scheduled for November 12.

2. Site Plan List

No questions or comments.

H. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Commissioner Pittelko gave the number for call-in comments.

No in-person comments nor call-in comments.

I. CITY COMMISSION LIAISON COMMENTS

Commissioner Praedel said he loves when people show up and are passionate about something. He appreciated how intentional the Planning Commissioners were to listen to each person. Commissioner Praedel welcomed Commissioner Bissonnette to his first meeting. He announced that Commissioners Cooney and Decker were stepping off the City Commission. On Monday, November 17, they will have an Oath of Office and will swear in new City Commissioners Drew Duncan and Jae Slaby. He also wanted to congratulate Commissioner Hoffman and Mayor Anderson on their re-election. Commissioner Praedel encouraged people to attend that meeting. He noted appreciation for the Planning Commissioners because they are volunteers.

J. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS BY PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Curtiss thanked people for the outpouring of public sentiment. It was a long meeting, but it was worth it to hear from the public. He announced that the process for IK 2035 was ongoing. Anyone can help by giving public input on those ongoing proceedings with the Master Plan.

Commissioner Kostrzewa mentioned the amazing turnout. He wanted everyone to know they are free to apply to boards. Nothing stops citizen participation.

Planning Commission

November 6, 2025

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K. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pittelko adjourned the meeting at 12:02am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christina Anderson,

City Planner

Community Planning & Economic Development